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ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

EDWARD M. McDONALD

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JOLIET JUNIOR COLLEGE

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

INTERVIEWEE AGREEMENT

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INTERVIEWEE: MR. EDWARD McDONALD

INTERVIEWER: MR. JOSEPH WHITE

INTERVIEWER: This is an interview with Mr. Edward McDonald for the Joliet Junior College Oral History Program by Joseph White at Mr. McDonald's home in Joliet, Illinois, September 25, 1975, at 7:00 p.m.

WHITE: Mr. McDonald, where were you born?

McDONALD: I was born in this very house we now live in.

WHITE: Have you lived here all your life?

McDONALD: That's right.

WHITE: Do you know who built this house? And when?

McDONALD: No, I don't know. This house was built a long time ago. I'd say the main part of this house is probably 125 years old right now.

WHITE: Did your father move in, or did he have it built?

McDONALD: My father and mother moved here after the place was bought by my grandfather about 1901, something like that.

WHITE: You have a long history of McDonalds living here.

McDONALD: Yes.

WHITE: I wonder if you could describe when you were growing up, what did a normal day consist of on the farm?

McDONALD: Well, pretty much the same as now. In those days we milked cows; that was about the first chore in the morning. Then we had break-

fast, and after breakfast we finished up the other chores. In the summertime we went to the field and put in the crops and took care of them.

WHITE: What type of machinery would you use back then for that?

McDONALD: Well, it was the machinery that was used in those days. We farmed with horses, and it was all horse-drawn machinery, much different than it is today.

WHITE: A lot harder?

McDONALD: Well, yes, but I don't know. We seemed to have more time in those days then we have now. Of course, everybody is running maybe five or six times as much ground as we did then with the big machinery they have nowadays.

WHITE: From what I understand -- I was talking to your son Mike -- and he was saying, going to school, you went to what school now?

McDONALD: I first went down here to this school -- they called it the Wilhelmi School. It still stands there -- part of it -- but it has been added on to, next to Lee's Store. I went there until I finished sixth grade, and then I went to the Sacred Heart School in the south end of Joliet. I graduated two years later. I then went to the Joliet Twonship High School and graduated from there; then I spent two years at Joliet Junior College and graduated from there. That's the extent of my school.

WHITE: I understood that on certain days you would drive a wagon to Central.

McDONALD: No, I never drove a wagon; it was a horse and buggy -- if you know what a buggy is. It has a top on it, something that a wagon didn't have. It was very common in those days. All farmers had them. They were

in the city, too. I hauled two or three cans of milk when I was going to school -- left the horse at a livery stable during the school hours and picked it up at night and come back -- hardly any automobiles in those days, very few.

WHITE: What type of roads did they have then?

McDONALD: Well, at that time they were gravel roads such as some country roads still are. There were gravel roads, pretty well kept up; and this first paved road here was built in 1918 or 1919, if I remember correctly. I was out of school by then, and I drove a team of horses to help build the first paved road that went by here. I drove a team of horses during the summer and helped construct it. The work was mostly done with horses -- very little power machinery at that time. Much different than it is now.

WHITE: Since you didn't have very much mechanized machinery, how would you go about harvesting the crops?

McDONALD: Well, we did have a binder; we had binders. We had an oat binder, and we also had a corn binder that would cut the grain and bind it into bundles. That was probably the most complicated machine that we had. It would harvest the oats, wheat, or barley, or whatever we had. But it was mostly oats (we grew mostly oats); it would bind it into bundles. This binder had a carrier on it; and after it got four or five or six bundles, it would drop it off in a row in the field. Then somebody would come along and set them up in a shock, what we called a shock. It was about nine bundles that you stand up to keep the heads away from the ground so as to preserve the quality of the grain, and then there'd be a cap that would be put on -- one of the bundles -- that would shed some of the water and keep the grain

in good quality; and it would stay there for probably two weeks, something on that order, depending much on the weather. Then we'd thresh. We'd have a threshing ring, that we caleld at that time, which consists of a number of neighbors, maybe twelve or fifteen. There was one man that owned the separator. The separator was the part of the equipment that separated the oats from the straw. The oats, the grain, would come out, and we would put it in a wagon. The straw would be put in a stack and keep that for use during the winter. The engine that run the threshing machine was a steam engine at that time. Later on they used big, larger tractors. The steam engine was the most popular, and they'd go from one farm to another, and we'd help one another. We'd cover the entire route which would take maybe a month, depending on the weather. This is the way the grain was harvested.

WHITE: Was this a real close neighborhood, in distance?

McDONALD: We'd reach out two or three miles, and we'd cover maybe fifteen farms, or something like that. One would help one another to offset the expense of the work. The only thing that we paid for was the thresher that harvested the grain. He'd get paid. Otherwise, the farmers would just change help, as they called it.

WHITE: You wouldn't go out and hire a person as a hired hand, then?

McDONALD: Well, I have hired fellows. But it'd depend on how much grain you had compared to another fellow. If you had twice as much, you'd probably have to furnish two fellows for him coming back by himself. That had to be evened up, see. I hired fellows to help. There was a certain number of the farmers that had team and wagon, and team and hayrack, what they called "hauling bundles". They would load the shocks in the field after it

stood there a couple of weeks and put them in this wagon and bring them into the threshing machine. We used to have fellows that would pitch bundles; they would pitch bundles from the shock onto the wagon, and the fellow who drove the team would build the load. It was built accordingly so that it could stand the ride in and we wouldn't lose it. Then he would pitch them into the thresher machine and go back and get another load.

WHITE: How was the areas then -- around this area right here, you house -- Are the farmers getting closer together, or were there vast acres of just farm land?

McDONALD: Well, the farms were pretty much the same, but many of the farms are run by just one fellow now. He runs maybe two or three farms, but our own case here -- we farm the original farm of 160 acres. At that time we did have 40 more acres that we have sold off quite a few years ago. It wasn't very close to home and it was kind of a chore to get there, back and forth. Then when the hard road came, why it made it more so, especially with the horses. Of course, they do it nowadays with the tractors; they can run them over the road and so forth much easier.

WHITE: When you were saying before about the first hard road, you were referring, of course, to (Route) 53 out here. What type of road was that before?

McDONALD: Well, at that time it didn't have any state number or anything. When they built the first paved road a long time ago, this road right out here was Route 66 which was an old time road. It was the main road between Chicago and St. Louis. And then, later on -- eventually -- it ran all the way across the country. Then they changed it over west here where Route 55 is now. That was called (Route) 66 at one time. Then this was changed

then to what they called (Route) 66-A. It would spur off the other and come out at Welco up there, if you know where Welco is. Then it hooked onto the other 66 down at Gardner. Then it went on that way for some time and then here back some years ago they changed this to Route 53.

WHITE: How has the road really changed though from the gravel road, and then you're saying the first hard road? Now I see it's a four-lane. When has all of this taken place?

McDONALD: This four-lane road was built when the ammunition plant come into being down here, which was around 1941, '42, something like that. Well, at that time there was lots of traffic by here which was connected with the building of the plant. And then after the plant was built, a lot of people worked there; and the road got pretty busy, and they made it to a four-lane road. As a matter of fact, before the four-lane road was here, when that single-lane road was here, I can remember when there was a solid string of cars, especially at night when they were going home from work that were -- sometimes they'd get stalled and just stand. There were just cars bumper-to-bumper. That was one of the reasons they put in the four-lane highway. I can well remember -- this was after the ammunition plant was built -- there was an explosion down there, an accident; and I think there was two or three got killed. A couple of them they never found; they were blew apart so bad. It happened during the night and I can remember the thud. I didn't know what it was. We knew it was something that was unusual, and a short time later we saw ambulances and police and red lights going down the road, and we didn't realize or know what happened until the next morning. That was not too long after the plant was in operation. Somebody had made a mistake of some kind, or was smoking, or something when they

shouldn't have been, or something like that. I don't know what the real cause, or if it was ever found out what the cause was. It was really a very serious explosion.

WHITE: Going back to when maybe you were fifteen or sixteen -- what type of effect did World War I have on your family or maybe the community?

McDONALD: Well, there was no one in our family that was old enough. I wasn't old enough to be in the army or be drafted. But I've known some fellows that were not too much older than I was -- I was a bit young -- that went into the army. Some of them didn't come back, but most of them did. Just how things changed, I really can't say.

WHITE: Did things seem a lot rougher during those war years?

McDONALD: Well that is quite a while back to remember. I remember at that time we were working this 40 acres that I speak of, away from home. One thing that does stick in my mind is that the Troop Train went down one day with a lot of young fellows on it. /Laughter/ They were going from one camp to another for something, and I happened to be working in the field, and they were hanging out of the windows, everything, on that train. All soldiers, I do remember that. We were working right along the -- they called it the Chicago and Alton Railroad at that time. It's now the Gulf, Mobile, and Ohio; but at that time it was a pretty busy railroad, much more so than now. That is one thing that stayed in my mind, that trainload of soldiers that were going South that particular day.

WHITE: You don't by chance know where they were going to? Which camp?

McDONALD: I don't know. They had some camps -- there was the Fort

Leonard Wood Camp down in Missouri there which is still there, I guess. And there were fellows at Fort Sheridan, and there was a lot of camps through the country. They would transfer them from one place to the other.

WHITE: How was Joliet -- the city itself -- back then? I mean, was it small?

McDONALD: Well, it was smaller than it is now, yes. It was quite a lot smaller, and it has changed tremendously. In those days you could leave your doors unlocked, and you could walk downtown any time of the day or night and feel very safe -- not like it is now. I can remember before the track elevation got in -- was constructed in Joliet there -- the train went, the Rock Island train went, right across where -- just missed the courthouse there. I think it cut off the corner of the courthouse yard, and there is still a building there on Jefferson Street right east of Chicago Street that's on an angle. That is where the railroad run there. And I think the Herald-News Building is on a slant there in the back just where the Rock Island cut through. And then the Chicago and Alton was straight north and south, the way it runs now. That wasn't changed any. And then when the Union Station was built and the tracks were elevated, the Rock Island tracks were changed somewhat to what they are now. But the city has changed a whole lot.

WHITE: What was it like to go downtown -- I mean what would you do for say maybe entertainment? Is that what you would do, go downtown?

McDONALD: Well, I never went down too much. Those were horse-and-buggy days years and years ago when I was young. They had a place they called

the Horse Market that was right at the corner of Washington and Joliet Streets. It was a block in there where the farmers would bring their horses in and trade among themselves there. And if you had some oats or hay to see -- I remember my father, many a time, he'd take a load of oats or a load of hay and go in there, and he'd set around there for a little while. And some of the businessmen or some of the people in town that were in business that were using horses, they'd have to have some feed for them and they'd come and buy that hay or buy that oats. There was scales around different places at a grain company or so forth or a coal company or something like that where they had scales where they could drive over and weigh that and get a weight and they'd sell it by the ton or by the bushel. And they'd take it to their barn and unload it. There were lots of horses on the streets in Joliet then that were delivering different things. Most all businesses had some horses. The coal business . . . And I can remember I had an uncle named George Mahoney, the father of George Mahoney that worked at the Herald-News. They owned a grocery store at the corner of Cass and Chicago Streets right where the Kline's Store stands now. And they had a horse or two, and they kept it over on Joliet Street where they lived. They had a brick barn there. They were a market for hay and oats, same as a lot of others, and they only had two horses. And some places like the dairies that would have quite a few horses, they'd have quite a market for hay and oats and so forth. And there was a lot of horses through the town.

WHITE: What type of roads did they have downtown in that time?

McDONALD: Roads? Well, right downtown they were brick. I don't know if you can find any of them left or not. You might in a few places

where it is not travelled very much; you've probably seen them. They were brick, and that was the prevailing street at that time. And streetcars were running and so forth.

WHITE: Did you do much travelling when you were younger?

McDONALD: No, not a great deal. I used to go to Chicago with my father once in a while when he'd go into the Stockyards.

WHITE: How would you get up there?

McDONALD: We'd take the Rock Island to Engelwood -- that's on the south side of Chicago, there, and we'd get off at Englewood and take the streetcar to Halstead Street; and we'd change streetcars and go up Halstead Street to the Stockyards which was at 43rd Street, 43rd and Halstead. The cattle that we'd load the night before, we'd drive them down this road at that time. That was before it was paved; that's when the gravel road was here, and there wasn't too much traffic. All the farmers had fences. We'd drive them to the Stockyards which was down where the American Institute of Laundry is now; right alongside the Chicago-Alton Railroad they had a spur there, and they had a stockyards, oh, maybe as big as this house or so, partly as big, and they'd set up a stock car there that had a loading chute, and we'd put them in there and close the door and I always remember -- I was going to school at that time -- and I'd have to go through the process of what they called billing them out. I'd have to go to the railroad office down near the Union Station there and go through some kind of a form so they were billed out. They'd give the instructions to the train man and they'd pull them out of there and get them on the train, and get them on their way, and by the time my father'd

get into Chicago the next morning, the cattle would be there. And a commission man would have charge of them after they got into the Stockyards, and he'd make the deal between the commission man and the packer. And finally end up with the packer. He'd slaughter them.

WHITE: So the railroad wouldn't charge you a flat rate, or there'd be a percentage?

McDONALD: I don't know if I can answer that; it's been -- I was a young fellow at that time and I think there was a rate on a car. What it was, I just can't say. But prices at those times were nothing like they are now. I don't know what the charge would be for a carload of cattle. I remember we used to have. . . My father bought cattle out through the country here, and in the wintertime we'd load on an average of once a week to go into Chicago. During the rest of the week we'd accumulate them here from neighbors around within a radius of maybe ten, fifteen miles. And sometimes we'd have bulls that were strange among the others or among the cows and we'd have to put a big rope on them and tie them in the corner so they wouldn't get unruly on the way in and maybe cause some trouble or harm other cattle. I used to get some of this heavy hay-rope and form sort of a halter around their neck and nose and tie them in the corner. That was the first job in loading. We'd get them up there and tie them in first. And you had to have a little courage to do that, too. Some of those bulls were a little hard to handle. But we had a fellow working for us here by the name of Henry Arnold; he worked for us here for a number of years and he was a real cow man, and he could do it. He could do it if anybody could.

WHITE: What would the price be for a round trip to Chicago for passengers?

McDONALD: Oh, I just can't remember. I just can't remember.

WHITE: You were saying before that you went to the (Joliet) Junior College. Where was it located?

McDONALD: The Junior College was right where the Joliet Township High School is now. It was part of that.

WHITE: What was it like then to go to school at Joliet Township High School and the Junior College?

McDONALD: Well, I imagine, I don't know how it is now, but pretty much like it is today. I can remember the first day I went to high school. I was a farm boy and I wasn't used to anything that big or so many people and I come home without going to a class, I think; I just got lost and come home. But we had a -- there was one teacher that was my teacher, that we happened to know. His name was Mayo. He was an algebra teacher, mathematics, and he worked the summer before on our threshing route here. He worked for a month or so on the threshing route. He worked for a neighbor down the road here; we got acquainted with him. And the next day he got me straigntened out, and I knew where to go. It was okay after that.

WHITE: What type of newspapers did they have then?

McDONALD: Well, the Joliet Herald-News was in operation then. And we used to get what they called The Chicago Drover's Journal, which we still get. That was a daily paper at that time. Of course, my father was interested in the markets, the cattle market, especially, and that's how we kept posted on how to buy the stock that he bought out through the country. And that was a daily paper, as I say, at that time. And now

the last, oh, I would say the last eight or ten years, it's a weekly paper. Times have changed and the Chicago Union Stockyards used to be a very big affair. They'd get a lots of cattle in there, and a lots of hogs, every day. That was about the only market that farmers had for livestock within -- there was Chicago and St. Louis and some of these other big cities. Today it's changed where they have -- since trucks have come into the picture, why it has changed the market because they can move the stuff so quick and so easy. In those days everything was brought in by rail. There was some trucks starting to be used at that time. I can remember one neighbor down here -- he used to haul in with trucks, but that was the main thing and I can remember when there was..... It's hard to believe, but I can remember when there was a hundred thousand hogs in Chicago, in one day. In the Depression. It was back in the '30's. They were selling there for two and three cents a pound. And at the same time there was people in bread lines that didn't have enough money to buy food. There was so many hogs, cattle, that they were very cheap. But still people couldn't buy them. They didn't have any money.

WHITE: So the market would have dropped considerably then?

McDONALD: Yes. Well, at that time that was really The Depression when corn got down to 15 cents. I remember buying corn at Elwood for 17 cents a bushel to feed hogs, and the hogs were selling from two to three cents a pound. And then right in the depth of the Depression, Roosevelt, Franklin Roosevelt, was elected president; and it changed things. They put a loan price on corn. If you had corn stored in your crib, you could get a loan from the government. I think it was 45 cents a bushel. And that was a lifesaver for many a farmer that were losing their farms and they had no

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money. They could make that loan on their corn from the government for 45 cents a bushel. Well, the market was way down around 20 cents or so, and that saved many a farmer from losing his farm. Well, at the same time, many of them did lose it. They couldn't make the payments. If they were buying it or something like that, they couldn't make the payments. The product they had to sell was worthless. Just about worthless. I can remember when they burned corn instead of coal.

WHITE: Burned corn!

McDONALD: Burned corn. It was so cheap, and coal was high-priced. Coal had to be brought in, had to be shipped in, and after three or four different handlers got their charges out of it, why it wasn't cheap any more. That was The Depression. It was so rough, it was pretty hard to get enough money to get a haircut.

WHITE: Really! /Laughter/ During the Depression was this area very badly hit?

McDONALD: Oh, yes. Oh there was piles of people out of work. Piles of people. I can remember when they had what they called the WPA. The government was paying these people a small wage and they was just trying to find things to do. I know they came out this road, and that's how come we happen to have a number here. They went out as far as the town line which is right south here at the edge of our farm, Switzer Road, and they put a number -- they gave every place a number. And they had fellows doing, oh, any number of things to try to keep them busy, that's all, to keep them out of mischief. Those are pretty rough times.

WHITE: What were some of the big employers in the area around that time?

Say larger factories or places.....

McDONALD: Well, the steel mills in Joliet, and I can remember the coke oven. Of course, that's a branch of United States Steel, I guess; now I wouldn't be too sure. But the steel mill at Rockdale, and then up in north Joliet there, and I guess the Elgin, Joliet and Eastern Railroad employed quite a few people then. That was before Caterpillar ever moved into these parts. No doubt there was quite a few. I just can't think offhand, now.

WHITE: If people were working..... What type of, later on, during the Depression, and prior to the Depression, what type of transportation was, you know, mostly used then?

McDONALD: Well, getting into the '30's, there was getting to be quite a few automobiles, yes. I remember the first car we had was what, was a Haynes, H-A-Y-N-E-S. We had a Haynes, and in the wintertime we jacked it up and didn't use it. /Laughter/ It was down in the corncrib, and those jacks still hang down the wall there.

WHITE: What type of tires did it have?

McDONALD: Well, on the same order. They were different type tires. They were larger, maybe not the balloon-type that they have nowadays. But speaking about going to school, before I finished school, I had a Ford with a box on the back that I hauled milk with. That was the last year or so, I believe -- a Ford pickup.

WHITE: Do you remember what year?

McDONALD: No, I don't. We'd have to crank it; I remember that!

WHITE: I'll bet that was good on those cold days!

McDONALD: And it had foot levers that you'd press in. There was no lever to gear shift. You'd press in for first speed, and then when you got a little motion, you'd lean back and that'd throw it into high. /Laughter/ And in the center there was a neutral some place. It had a foot brake, too. And an emergency brake. That was when I was finishing school. Then we hauled grain with a team and wagon until we finally got a Chevrolet truck. I remember the team and wagon. It was what they called the True-B Grain Company. We had to cross the river on McDonough Street to get up there. After we crossed the river and went up Center Street and right where the Champion Machinery Company Building is now, there was a True-B Grain Company right over to the right along the railroad. And how well I can remember when we'd go to drive in the elevator there and drive out, it was about 20 or 30 feet down and right there was the railroad and it was kind of treacherous and scary. Also going over that McDonough Street Bridge there was two streetcar tracks which occupied the full width of the bridge, and if you'd happen to meet a streetcar on there, why it would really worry you. /Laughter/ Because the horses weren't used to that kind of scenery. The same way with the train -- we used to have to go over the Santa Fe tracks down here on Chicago Street where they're still there. The Santa Fe used to go underneath, though, and we had a bridge over these. We'd drive right level with the C. & A. tracks. Soon as we got over the C. & A. tracks, there was a hump, a bridge, there that would go over the Santa Fe. And if you were lucky enough to get across there without a train puffing underneath or something like that, why you'd be pretty lucky. /Laughter/ If the horses had plenty of life, why it would give you some-

thing to worry about.

WHITE: During those years you were just talking about now, were tractors becoming more prominent?

McDONALD: Yes, tractors were coming in. Yes, there was getting to be some in the neighborhood. I got my first tractor in 1937. It was an International -- what they called an F-20. It was a cultivating tractor with narrow wheels at front and wide wheels in the back. We plowed with it. And used it. We still had some horses. As a matter of fact we had a team of horses for quite some time that we used to plant corn, and cut hay, and rake hay, and cover the threshing route and jobs like that. But we got the first tractor in 1937; then I got a cultivator a few years later. We kept that tractor until we got the second one, in 1950. And I've still got that tractor....1950. That was an International Farmall-M. That was more modern and much easier to handle, more power and so forth. And, of course, now we've got a large International now. It's got a lot more power and it's got a cab on it with a heater, radio, and so forth.

WHITE: A little luxury there!

McDONALD: Compared to what it used to be, yes, this is the first tractor that I've ever had with a cab on it, which is nice when it gets cold, or stormy and so forth.

WHITE: Now the tractors themselves, they were gasoline-powered, right?

McDONALD: Yes, they were gasoline-powered. The diesels finally come in. The last two tractors I've had were diesel. They burned diesel fuel. But the old "M" that I still have burns gasoline. The diesels are much more economical to run.

WHITE: What was gasoline going for then?

McDONALD: I don't believe I can answer that. Much cheaper than it is now. We didn't have all the taxes on it that they have now. There's taxes now that raise the price of everything.

WHITE: They would deliver it for you, wouldn't they?

McDONALD: Yes, there's always been tank-wagons come in the country. Same as there are now.

WHITE: During the years prior to the Depression -- during the Prohibition Era, what was it like during Prohibition?

McDONALD: Well, I was pretty young then. I didn't get around too much. Not off the farm too much. But there were some stills operating. I remember one still that was, oh, within a mile from here. And the neighbors knew it. Finally, it was raided; and then I can remember there was a silo on this place. Everybody suspected that there was a still there. But there was a silo on this place. Do you know what a silo is? It's a cylindrical, maybe 14, 16 feet in diameter, maybe 30, 40, 50 feet high. We could see smoke coming out of the top of that. Just a little, see, just a little. And you'd wonder something peculiar was going on there. And there was trucks that would go down this side road south here, and vans, and closed-in trucks; and you'd wonder where they went. But I guess that's where they were going. /Laughter/ Hauling the stuff away or something. But they finally got raided and then maybe after a while, they'd start in again. But there was boot-legging going on at that time, as history tells about it. Pretty hard to control that entirely.

WHITE: You wouldn't say there was very much around this area or out near here?

McDONALD: No, well, you know what happened in Chicago and Cicero there -- Al Capone and stuff like that. But there was stuff going on. There's no question about that. There was stuff going on at all times.

WHITE: Dealing on the subject, you know, sort of the politics of the area during, oh, let's say the time between World War I and World War II, how did it affect the farmers in anything that they did?

MCDONALD: Not too much. Not too much. The farmers have always up until lately, they have always produced. Supply and demand would control the prices. Most times there was plenty of supply, probably more than the demand, which would make things pretty cheap, probably. And then we come along to in the '30's there, we had the drought which really put a damper on production. I can remember the year we had chinch bugs that just about et up everything. It was bugs that multiply. The dry weather promoted the . . . . encouraged them and promoted their growth. They multiplied and multiplied, and they just came along and et everything up. They took the corn. We laid out creosote lines to try to stop them. We'd get barrels of creosote and use a sprinlking can and put a line across where you'd try to keep them back, see. Well, they'd come up to that line and keep crowding, and the first thing you'd know, they'd crowd over and go ahead. /Laughter/ And the corn at that time, I can remember, it was dry weather and the things weren't growing very good. Things were kinda delicate and when they got at the corn, why it didn't last very long. It just killed it. We didn't have much of a crop there, for one year in particular that I know of. But we had drought for a few different years

when we had what they called the dust storms; the dust bowl out in Kansas was coming this way, and I can remember dust so -- it covered the sunshine and it'd get partly dark. There'd be so much dust a-blowing. And, of course, when it gets that dry, why crops are pretty hard to grow. And the farmer, he always tried to produce all he could. Of course, those years we had horses and we used some of our own products which changed the picture from what it is now. Nowadays everything we raise is put on the market, and we buy gasoline and oil instead, see. It made a different picture; but as time went on, the farmers got to producing more. I can remember when we had a crop of 40 or 50 bushels of corn per acre, we thought we had a very good crop. Now it's twice that much, maybe more. Of course, nowadays we're using fertilizer. And the modern method of farming with tractors improved the farming operation, and we can raise better crops. But the consumer, the people in town, have always had cheap food; and the way it is nowadays when farmers are getting a reasonable price for their product, the people in the city thinks that they're paying too much. We're just coming out on equal par to what everybody else is getting. That's happening the last few years. And a lot of consumers can't realize that. They're used to cheap food, and they think it should continue.

WHITE: How have the people changed over the years -- in a way -- Not to single out anyone, but, oh, say, in thinking, or in the way they are doing things, from your standpoint?

McDONALD: Well, I don't know.

WHITE: Maybe as a..... well, when you were a young person -- how did your parents put your restrictions upon you? How do you think it's changed over the years?

McDONALD: Oh, yeah, it has changed a lot. Young people nowadays are much more on their own. Parents used to have a lot more control over their kids than they have nowadays. /Chuckle/ There's no question about that.

WHITE: What type of restrictions were put on the younger people?

McDONALD: Well, those days, when I was young, you couldn't get around so much, you know. They didn't have automobiles, and that has changed the picture tremendously. Automobiles -- and you can really go places, and do things that you couldn't do otherwise. For instance, now we're only an hour out of downtown Chicago here; and I remember going to Chicago when I was a kid and that was an all-day affair. Going to drive into town, and put your horse and buggy in the livery stable, take the train and go into Chicago and I can remember being in Chicago on a Saturday. I can't remember the date exactly -- it was in the summertime. Around July, I believe when the Eastland, a boat on the Chicago River, tipped over. I don't know if you ever heard of that.

WHITE: No, I haven't.

McDONALD: And I think about a thousand people drowned in that. That particular day they were going on an aouting, a vacation, or something; and this was a pleasure boat, and they were docked on the river there. Just as they were leaving, everybody was waving and seeing them off; and they all rushed over to one side, and then the thing tipped over. That was the end of that. I can remember being in Chicago that very day. Now you will probably read about that some time. That would be the date. I don't think I was over 10, 12 years old at that time. But I read the paper just not too long ago where that was..... gave the history of that,

and some sort of an anniversary of that happening. That was a, it was an all-day affair when you went to Chicago -- on the train, and streetcars were running in Chicago.

WHITE: Did they have any streetcars coming out near this area here?

McDONALD: No. Streetcars used to run to Minooka; streetcars used to run to Plainfield, and there was a streetcar between Chicago and Joliet. I had an uncle that was a motorman on that. They went through Lockport and all those smaller towns. He'd make a couple trips a day, back and forth. They had a schedule. There was a streetcar that went to Minooka; I'm sure that I can remember that.

WHITE: What was it like to ride on the streetcars then?

McDONALD: Well....Did you ever ride in a streetcar?

WHITE: No, I haven't.

McDONALD: Well, it's about like a train. They'd have a motorman. There was a place called Dellwood Park. You probably know where it is up near Lockport there. That was owned by the streetcar company at that time. And that was really a place for picnics and outings during the summertime on the streetcar. You can still see the road where the streetcar went up in there. And they had quite a park there. They had all kinds of amusements. They had boating there. You can still see -- it's all dried up now -- but you can still see where there's a dam there and they used to have baseball games and dancing and picnics there -- during the summertime. A streetcar was run from a trolley, you know, on top -- electric. That's how they got their power.

WHITE: These smaller communities around Joliet, what were they like around the '30's or '40's, say maybe Elwood or Wilmington?

McDONALD: Wilmington.....I can remember going to Wilmington when there was a gravel road. I had a grandmother lived down there. They weren't too much different than now. Of course, everything has been improved in regard to streets and so forth. But you get in these small towns, why everyone knows each other and that part of it has changed some. But outside of that I don't know if it's changed too much. Of course, the automobile's changed a lot of things. They live in a town and work maybe 30, 40, 50 miles away the way it is nowadays with good roads and an automobile.

WHITE: I do believe we've covered a good bit, so I'll call it quits. I want to thank you very much for all the interesting information you have given me. This has been a good interview.

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